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COOPERATION WITH RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Cooperation with other conventions: progress report on the work of the Joint Liaison Group between the secretariats of the UNFCCC, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

Note by the secretariat

CONTENTS

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	INTRODUCTION	1 - 5	2
	A. Mandate	1 - 3	2
	B. Scope of the note	4	2
	C. Possible action by the SBSTA	5	2
II.	BACKGROUND	6 - 17	2

Annexes

I.	Recent conclusions of the UNFCCC, UNCCD and CBD	5
II.	Overview of bodies of the UNFCCC, the UNCCD and the CBD	7

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Mandate

1. The Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA), at its tenth,[1] eleventh,[2] twelfth[3] and thirteenth[4] sessions, encouraged the secretariat to enhance cooperation with other United Nations bodies and conventions.

2. The SBSTA, at its fourteenth session, endorsed the formation of a Joint Liaison Group (JLG) between the secretariats of the UNFCCC and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). It requested the secretariat of the UNFCCC to invite the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) to participate in this JLG in order to enhance coordination between the three conventions, and to explore options for further cooperation, including the possibility of a joint work plan and/or a workshop. It requested the secretariat to report periodically to the SBSTA on the activities and proposals of the JLG (FCCC/SBSTA/2001/2, para. 42).

3. The SBSTA, at its fifteenth session, requested the JLG to collect and share information on the work programmes and operations of each convention including: (i) roles and responsibilities of the secretariats, and any relevant scientific and technical bodies or expert groups; (ii) types of activities under each convention; (iii) potential areas of cooperation, possible joint activities, and any potential conflicts associated with different mandates. It also requested the JLG to examine the possibility of holding a joint workshop before the eighteenth session of the SBSTA to explore the issues relating to interlinkages between the three conventions (FCCC/SBSTA/2001/8, para. 41).

B. Scope of the note

4. This note presents information in response to the above mandate. The information is intended to inform Parties about the efforts of the secretariat to cooperate with UNCCD and CBD, particularly through the JLG. Parties may wish to read this document in conjunction with views submitted by Parties contained in document FCCC/SBSTA/2002/MISC.9.

C. Possible action by the SBSTA

5. The SBSTA may wish to take note of information contained in this paper, provide further guidance to the secretariat related to cooperation with UNCCD and CBD and consider whether it wishes to forward a decision to the COP on this matter.

II. BACKGROUND

6. The bodies of the UNFCCC, the UNCCD and the CBD have, in several recommendations, conclusions and decisions, encouraged the secretariats of the three conventions to co-operate and manage their respective processes as coherently as possible. The most recent conclusions of the three conventions are summarized in annex I. An overview of the bodies of the three conventions is contained in annex II.

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1 FCCC/SBSTA/1999/6, para. 22.

2 FCCC/SBSTA/1999/14, para. 99.

3 FCCC/SBSTA/2000/5, para. 59.

4 FCCC/SBSTA/2000/10, para. 57.

Meetings of the JLG

7. The first meeting of the JLG took place in Washington, United States of America, on 6 December 2001. It was chaired by the Executive Secretary of UNFCCC. The participants included the executive secretaries of the three conventions, officers of the subsidiary bodies and members of the secretariats. The purpose of the meeting was to exchange information from recent meetings of the three conventions, share information on plans for the forthcoming year and explore opportunities to enhance cohesion between the three secretariats and their respective subsidiary bodies. The participants agreed that responsibility for organizing and chairing subsequent meetings would rotate among the secretariats.

8. The participants agreed: (1) to create a common calendar of activities for posting on the respective web sites of the three conventions; (2) to identify high priority events which may require the participation of the staff members of other secretariats; (3) to hold a joint workshop on forests and forestry, an issue of common interest to the three conventions. The purpose of the workshop would be to exchange information, identify options for further cooperation and explore opportunities to promote coherence among the conventions. A report on the results of the workshop will be made available to the SBSTA of the UNFCCC and the relevant bodies of the other conventions. In addition, discussions took place on how links could be established between expert groups of the conventions and the IPCC and on the possibility of exchanging experts between these groups.

9. The second meeting of the JLG took place in New York, United States of America, on 30 January 2002. The meeting was chaired by the Executive Secretary of CBD. The purpose of the meeting was to exchange information on the work of the subsidiary bodies, consider a draft joint calendar and list of priority events and review progress in the preparations of the joint workshop on forests. The chairmen of the subsidiary bodies of the three conventions reported on activities, conclusions and decisions relevant to the JLG.

10. The Chairman of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) of CBD recalled the outcome of SBSTTA 7.[5] He also reported on the outcome of the first meeting of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG),[6] on biological diversity and climate change. The second meeting of the AHTEG is planned to be held before October 2002.[7]

11. The Chairman of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) of the UNCCD reported on the formation of a group of experts which is expected to initiate its work in October 2002. The Chairman of the Committee for the Review and Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) reported that CRIC was established in July 2001 and will meet for the first time in November 2002. The Executive Secretary of UNCCD reported on national meetings organized by that secretariat to identify and develop synergies between the three conventions.

12. The Chairman of UNFCCC's SBSTA reported on the outcome of the Conference of the Parties (COP) at its seventh session and of the subsidiary bodies at their fifteenth sessions and informed the JLG about a series of workshops to be held prior to the eighth session of the COP. Particular attention was

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5 UNEP/CBD/COP/6/4.

6 UNEP/CBD/COP/6/INF/6.

7 Information that emerges from the CBD process may have implications for the work of the SBSTA of the UNFCCC. The SBSTTA of the CBD will probably consider information from the AHTEG at its eighth session, in time for Parties to the UNFCCC to decide whether and how to reflect such information in the work of the SBSTA, for example, in developing definitions and modalities for including afforestation and reforestation project activities under Article 12 of the Kyoto Protocol.

drawn to workshops on the following: terms of reference and an agenda for work relevant to definitions and modalities for including afforestation and reforestation activities under Article 12 of the Kyoto Protocol in the first commitment period technology information; methodologies for technology needs assessment; and revision of the guidelines for non-Annex I national communications. The UNFCCC secretariat offered to provide these draft guidelines to the other secretariats.

13. The third meeting of the JLG will take place in April 2002 on the margins of the sixth meeting of the COP to the CBD in The Hague. The meeting will be chaired by the Executive Secretary of UNCCD.

Recent activities

14. A joint calendar of events relevant to the three conventions was published in March on the web site of UNFCCC.[8] It includes links to easily access the complete calendars of UNFCCC, UNCCD and CBD. In addition, an internal tool to facilitate participation of members of each secretariat in key events organized by the other secretariats has been developed.

15. In response to a request of the CBD secretariat to identify experts in the field of conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in dryland, Mediterranean, arid, semi-arid, grassland and savannah ecosystems, the UNFCCC secretariat provided the CBD secretariat with access to its database of experts.

16. The UNFCCC secretariat will loan one of its officers to the CBD secretariat to support the sixth meeting of the COP in The Hague between 7 and 19 April 2002. It is anticipated that this assignment will improve further understanding between the secretariats of the two conventions.

17. A joint exhibit of the secretariats of the three conventions to display information on achievements since the Earth Summit in 1992, and to provide programmatic and organizational information on the three conventions during the World Summit on Sustainable Development, is under consideration.

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[8] See www.unfccc.int. See also the UNCCD web site at www.unccd.int and the CBD web site at www.biodiv.org.

Annex I

Convention on Biological Diversity

1. The SBSTTA of the CBD, at its sixth meeting, requested the Executive Secretary of CBD, in consultation with the UNFCCC secretariat, to explore the formation of a JLG between the bureau members of the relevant subsidiary bodies of the UNFCCC and the CBD, and their respective secretariats (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/6/11, recommendation VI/7). The purpose of the JLG would be to enhance coordination between the two conventions including exchange of relevant information, development of a joint work plan to address the interlinkages between climate change and biological diversity, and the organization of a joint workshop to further cooperation between the two conventions. At the same meeting, the SBSTTA agreed to undertake a pilot assessment to prepare scientific advice to integrate biodiversity considerations into the implementation of the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol. For this purpose, also at the same meeting, the SBSTTA established an ad hoc technical expert group (AHTEG) on biological diversity and climate change. This would be part of a wider assessment of the interlinkages between biological diversity and climate change. The SBSTTA invited UNFCCC and other relevant organizations to contribute to this assessment. It further invited the IPCC to contribute by preparing a technical paper and by identifying experts (UNEP/CBD/COP/6/3, paras. 5-9).[9]

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

2. The SBSTA, at its fourteenth session, emphasized the need for enhanced cooperation between the UNFCCC and other relevant conventions, and welcomed the proposal by the SBSTTA of the CBD on potential areas of collaboration and coordinated action between CBD and UNFCCC. It encouraged Parties to promote the involvement of climate change expertise in the CBD pilot assessment of the interlinkages between climate change and biological diversity. At the same meeting, the SBSTA endorsed the formation of a JLG between the secretariats of UNFCCC, CBD and UNCCD (see section A. Mandate above). The SBSTA supported the request of the SBSTTA of the CBD that the IPCC develop a technical paper, and welcomed the scoping paper prepared by the IPCC. The SBSTA invited the IPCC to consider interlinkages between climate change, biodiversity and desertification in developing its technical paper (FCCC/SBSTA/2001/2, para. 42).

3. The SBSTA, at its fifteenth session, reaffirmed the need for enhanced cooperation between UNFCCC, CBD and UNCCD. It noted with appreciation the report provided by the IPCC on the preparation of the technical paper on the interlinkages between climate change, biodiversity and desertification and encouraged the IPCC to make the findings of this report available to the SBSTA at its sixteenth session.[10] The SBSTA also noted a range of views by Parties on the role of convention bodies and, in particular, of the JLG in improving cooperation and coordination. The SBSTA, at the same session, requested the JLG to collect and share information on the work programmes and operations of each convention (see section A. Mandate above). The SBSTA also requested the JLG to examine the possibility of holding a joint workshop before the eighteenth session of the SBSTA to explore the issues relating to interlinkages between the three conventions (FCCC/SBSTA/2001/8, para. 41).

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[9] Further information is available on the CBD web site at http://www.biodiv.org/cross-cutting/climate.

[10] It is expected that the IPCC Bureau, at its twenty-fifth session, will consider and approve a final draft of this paper. Subject to this approval, the paper will be made available to delegates at the session. The AHTEG of the CBD, at its first meeting, from 21 to 25 January 2002 in Helsinki, Finland, considered the IPCC paper. The report of this meeting will also be made available to delegates and can be viewed at www.biodiv.org/doc.

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

4. In response to the invitation of the SBSTA to the secretariat of the UNCCD to participate in the JLG, the Executive Secretary of the UNCCD, by his letter dated 22 August 2001, agreed to join this group. The COP to the UNCCD, at its fifth session, noted the report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the review of the UNCCD[11] and expressed support for the integration of approaches between UNFCCC, CBD and UNCCD. It advocated decentralized capacity building to promote synergistic programmes wit. a territorial basis in drylands. In his summary of the ministerial and high level interactive dialogue session that took place during the same session, the President of the COP underlined the potential of the UNCCD for poverty reduction and mainstreaming multilateral environment agreements into the mainstream of poverty reduction strategies. It requested the CST to include consideration of land/soil degradation and its linkages to other environmental conventions in its programme of work. In addition, the COP requested the CST to enhance cooperation with the SBSTTA of the CBD and the SBSTA of the UNFCCC, and to report to the sixth session of the COP on such cooperation.

[11] ICCD/COP/(5)/6.

Annex II

Overview of the bodies of the UNFCCC, the UNCCD and the CBD

	UNFCCC	UNCCD	CBD
Conference of the Parties	COP (186 Parties)	COP (179 Parties)	COP (183 Parties)
President	Mr. Mohamed Elyazghi	Mr. Charles Bassett	Ms. Geke Faber
Bureau	1 President, 7 Vice-Presidents, 2 Chairpersons of the subsidiary bodies, 1 Rapporteur	1 President, 9 Vice-Presidents and 1 Chairperson of the CST	1 President, 10 Vice-Presidents (including 1 acting as Rapporteur)
Subsidiary bodies	Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA)	Committee on Science and Technology (CST)	Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA)
Chairperson	Mr. Halldor Thorgeirsson	Mr. Philbert Brown	Mr. Jan Plesnik
Bureau	1 Chairperson, 1 Vice-Chairperson, 1 Rapporteur	1 Chairperson, 4 Vice-Chairpersons	1 Chairperson, 9 Vice-Chairpersons
	Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI)	Committee for the Review and Implementation of the Convention (CRIC)	- - -
Chairperson	Mr. Raul Estrada-Oyuela	Mr. Rogatien Biaou	- - -
Bureau	1 Chairperson, 1 Vice-Chairperson, 1 Rapporteur	1 Chairperson, 1 Vice-Chairperson, 1 Rapporteur	- - -
Other bodies and expert groups	Expert group on technology transfer, Consultative Group of Experts, Executive Board of the Clean Development Mechanism	CST Group of Experts	Ad Hoc Technical Expert Groups and liason groups on various issues
Secretariat			
Executive Secretary	Ms. Joke Waller-Hunter	Mr. Arba Diallo	Mr. Hamdallah Zedan

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